DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 460 671 HE 034 605

AUTHOR	Fincher, Cameron
TITLE	Faculty Development in Georgia. IHE Perspectives.
INSTITUTION	Georgia Univ., Athens. Inst. of Higher Education.
PUB DATE	2001-06-00
NOTE	8p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Institute of Higher Education, Meigs Hall, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602-6772. Tel: 706-542-3464; Fax: 706-542-7588. For full text: http://www.uga.edu/ihe.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*College Faculty; Doctoral Programs; *Faculty Development; *Graduate Study; Higher Education; *Teacher Recruitment; Teacher Supply and Demand
IDENTIFIERS	*University of Georgia

ABSTRACT

This paper describes a faculty development program initiated by the University of Georgia in 1964 to address a statewide faculty shortage. After 37 years, the program, Faculty Development in Georgia (FDIG), remains a successful example of inter-institutional cooperation. When FDIG began, 12 graduate assistantships were offered annually to faculty members currently teaching without degrees in other Georgia institutions. Although the program was called a predoctoral assistantship, the intent of the program was to provide a scholarship with tuition waiver and a stipend for living expenses that would permit full-time pursuit of a doctoral degree. During the history of the program, at least 347 awards have been given to at least 234 faculty members. No fewer than two-thirds of the accredited colleges in Georgia have participated in the FDIG program by granting academic leave to faculty members seeking doctoral degrees, and five colleges have made significant use of the program by the participation of a dozen or more faculty members. Eighty-six doctoral degrees were earned between 1982 and 1996. Ranking first in the number of faculty participants were the educational disciplines, with Fine Arts and Humanities second, and Behavioral and Social Sciences third. (SLD)

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Faculty Development in Georgia

IHE Perspectives

Cameron Fincher

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FACULTY DEVELOPMENT IN GEORGIA

by Cameron Fincher

In 1964 the University of Georgia made a generous and somewhat ingenious response to a statewide faculty shortage. A program was initiated whereby twelve graduate assistantships would be offered annually to faculty members currently teaching without doctoral degrees in other Georgia institutions. Thirty-seven years later the program is still operative and its story can be told as a successful example of inter-institutional cooperation that has often gone unnoticed but not unappreciated. Faculty Development in Georgia, as the program was later named, serves quite well as a model for cooperative agreements between state universities and other institutions of higher education, public or private, within the same state.

In 2001 the longevity and the success of the program can be attributed to the continuing emphasis placed on faculty development, instructional improvement, and teaching effectiveness—we quickly add the mutual benefits of the program to the University of Georgia and to thirty-six Georgia colleges. Initiated on a trial basis in 1963, the FDIG program was assigned in 1964 to the Institute of Higher Education under one of three original charges "To help recruit and develop faculties for public and private institutions in Georgia."

Quite relevant to the establishment of both the FDIG program and the Institute of Higher Education was the desegregation of the University of Georgia in 1962 and the challenge of "a tidal wave of students" when the post-war "baby-boomers" arrived on college campuses throughout the nation. Also relevant and influential was the Southern Regional Education Board's report, "Within Our Reach" in which a Blue-Ribbon Committee clearly identified the opportunity and attainable goals for the development of higher education in the Southern Region.

PURPOSES AND PROCEDURES

The criteria for participation in the program were simple and straightforward. To be accepted, participants must be: (a) admitted to a doctoral program at the University of Georgia, (b) nominated by their presidents, (c) granted leave of absence for a full academic year, and (d) agreed that for every year of leave, they would return and teach at their home institutions one academic year in their particular field of specialization.

Although called a pre-doctoral assistantship (for legal reasons), the intent of the program was to provide a scholarship with tuition waiver and a stipend for living expenses that would permit full-time pursuit of a doctoral degree. Participants could receive additional assistance from their home institutions; the combination of institutional assistance and the assistantship stipend should not exceed what the individual participant would earn if he or she remained on the job for a full academic year. Such conditions were specified with expectations that participants would attend summer school on their own as many of them did. If awards were granted early enough, participants could earn five quarters of academic credit within the span of one academic year of leave.

Some participants, under this arrangement, were able to complete course requirements and begin work on their dissertations

upon return to their home institutions. Most participants required at least two academic years to complete residency requirements, and preference was often given to participants making significant progress toward completion of degree requirements. In making application for a second or third award, participants often received letters of recommendation from their major professors or department heads encouraging them to remain oncampus and complete degree requirements.

The value of inter-institutional cooperation was quite evident in the nominations of presidents. Institutional need, as well as individual merit, was an explicit requirement and simply meant that letters of nomination should specify a need for faculty members in the nominee's particular teaching field. Individual merit, on the other hand, was assured by meeting admission requirements in their chosen academic departments. (*See Page 5*).

Less formal criteria included the severity of a faculty shortage in a particular field. Diversity of disciplines was never a criterion of importance because of the preference given institutional need. For institutions, however, type and control proved to be useful in assuring distribution within the state. Each year qualified nominees were tallied in a four-fold table for Public and Private Colleges *vs.* Four-Year and Two-Year institutions. With twelve annual choices to be made, it was possible to give awards to four candidates from each type of college.

Since the primary intent of the FDIG program is to provide full-time pursuit of a doctoral degree, many participants required intensive "briefing" on the requirements of their FDIG awards. Department heads often needed additional instructors for overflowing classes. Home institutions often requested exceptions that would permit participants to teach "a single course." And occasionally, a participant was certain that no one would object to harmlessly moonlighting with "one course". The redeeming feature of such temptations was found in the observation that the closer participants were to prelims or proposals for dissertations, the more they appreciated the opportunity to do so without distractions.

GRADUATE SEMINARS

To ensure that FDIG participants gained more than just another year of graduate study in their disciplines, they were required to participate in a weekly seminar addressing current issues and topics of interest in higher education. In the 1960s, the first two or three sessions focused on the institutions where the participants held faculty rank. Each participant was asked to bring materials related to institutional mission, programs, and major characteristics to stimulate further discussion. This effort was successful in extending the perspectives of faculty members from different colleges—and on numerous occasions, class discussions identified common interests, as well as common problems, in classroom teaching, student behavior, and examining-and-grading practices. Meeting at a time when there was no shortage of challenging, even crucial, issues, participants in the seminar learned much about their own institutions by listening to colleagues discuss similar problems and issues on other campuses.

Over the years, other arrangements were tried and modified as experience suggested. An opening conference, attended by participants and Institute staff, was effective for several years, but discontinued as one hour of graduate credit induced participants to attend a weekly seminar. In brief, the weekly seminar proved to be an added (and unexpected) benefit to participants from an appreciable diversity of academic disciplines. Equally important, no doubt, weekly discussions encouraged participants to consider one institution in light of the difficulties of other institutions. More often than not, discussions tended to focus on common, as opposed to unique, problems in college administration and governance, instructional improvement, and student achievement.

INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION

Several of the participating colleges made extensive and continuous use of the FDIG program to improve the teaching effectiveness of their faculties. A few colleges, however, ignored the annual announcements and never submitted a nomination of any faculty member. In their behalf, it should be said that the location of these colleges—especially if they were public colleges—were usually within driving distance of institutions in bordering states. For example, public colleges in southwest Georgia were closer to Florida State than to the University of Georgia. And colleges in the northwestern part of Georgia were obviously closer to Chattanooga or Knoxville than to Athens. Other colleges within Georgia would have welcomed the opportunity to upgrade their faculties but were not accredited. For these colleges, the FDIG program was disappointing; they were unaccredited because their faculties needed upgrading—and they could not take advantage of the opportunity to upgrade their faculties because they was not accredited.

Three public Historically Black Institutions within the State benefited significantly from the FDIG program. When coupled with federal funds, the FDIG awards gave special incentive to faculty members who had not been encouraged previously to pursue doctoral degrees in their teaching fields. Somewhat reluctant in the program's early years, colleges in the Atlanta University Complex nominated participants more frequently as the University of Georgia graduate programs were recognized nationally. Opportunities for inter-institutional cooperation had not been plentiful in the past, but federal funding again encouraged cooperative efforts between the two.

The rapid growth and development of the University System of Georgia gave incentive to two-year colleges, new and old, to participate in the FDIG program. The older colleges, no doubt, had hopes of becoming four-year colleges, as several of them did. In similar manner, several of the older four-year colleges wisely used the program to assist in their aspirations to achieve university status.

Oncampus at UGA, occasional ambivalence or indifference could be found in departments not familiar with the FDIG program. Some departments did not see the logic in awarding assistantships to their students and then prohibit their use as graduate assistants. On other occasions, neither department heads nor FDIG participants understood clearly that the latter were on leave from full-time faculty positions and should use their time on campus to learn, not to assist in teaching. A solution to the problem turned out to be quite simple: the Graduate Dean ruled that no FDIG participant could be assigned extra duties within his academic department without the approval of the director of the Institute of Higher Education.

REVIEW AND APPRAISAL

Although the stated objectives of the FDIG program remained the same, the situations and conditions generating the program changed rapidly within several years. Student protests—with or without faculty dissent—became a media event that undermined public support for higher education. A managerial revolution took precedence over the research revolution of the 1960s. And as situations in the early 1970s apparently dictated, the uses of the program were occasionally at variance with its original purposes.

In general, the benefits of the FDIG program created a closer working relationship between the Institute of Higher Education and the home institutions of the FDIG participants. These contacts and channels of communication were especially valuable in working with Historically Black Institutions and they often paved the way to other cooperative arrangements of mutual benefit to all parties. There is no doubt that the program has been "good public relations" for the University of Georgia—especially in areas

of the State where smaller institutions often regard themselves as "outside the mainstream."

Members of the Institute staff have worked, on one project or another, with all the colleges participating in the FDIG program. This, we may believe, is the result of concerted efforts to involve the FDIG participants, whenever possible, in the ongoing programs and services of the Institute. Invitations to our annual law conference were always extended and the attendance of FDIG participants was quite noticeable. Whenever resources and staff time permitted, staff assistance was given on dissertations or term projects of mutual interest. Staff members served on various doctoral committees, and on more than one occasion, FDIG participants were permitted to use an unoccupied desk or office. For several participants, the IHE Library was a valuable resource in the early years of the program.

The University itself has benefited in indirect ways from the presence oncampus of FDIG participants. No less than twenty or more former participants later joined the professional staff of UGA; others became colleagues in good standing and gave valuable assistance in "recruiting" other participants. And, of course, Institute staff members have had the pleasant experience of visiting a distant campus and being warmly greeted by "one of our" FDIG participants. It was especially pleasant to be greeted by a department head or dean who remembered his or her participation in "our program." And Yes! There is even greater pleasure in seeing a FDIG participant in an "honored position" such as associate or assistant vice chancellor— or in the Governor's Office. Professor Zell Miller of Young Harris College was one of the program's earliest participants and after serving as governor, he accepted appointment as Distinguished Professor of Higher Education at the University of Georgia before becoming Senator Miller.

LOOKING BACK:

From a later and quite different vantage point, the FDIG program is a remarkable learning experience and accomplishment in which Institute staff members can take pride. As a continuing service of the Institute, the FDIG program has continued to serve as an outstanding example of the University of Georgia's commitment to higher education throughout the State of Georgia.

The FDIG program, in turn, can claim that it too has served the State of Georgia well. The program remains an exemplary model for inter-institutional cooperation, as a generous example of resource-sharing and mutual benefit, and as a significant effort to improve the quality of undergraduate education. The FDIG program is definitely the forerunner of two larger and well-supported programs on the University of Georgia campus: the Office of Instructional Development and the Governor's Teaching Fellows Program. In other words, the continuing efforts of the FDIG program helped create and sustain an environment in which instructional development and technological innovations in faculty teaching can be disseminated.

The FDIG program, in its early days, was an excellent way of focusing on topics and issues related to the development of higher education in general. Participants in that "era" were not interested in learning how to teach; they already knew how to teach and they wanted to learn what they should teach students with dissimilar interests and needs. Thus, the FDIG Seminar in Higher Education proved to be a sound, practical way of engaging faculty members from different institutions, in directing their attention and interest to problems and issues confronting colleges and universities in a turbulent era. It was also a way of discussing instructional evaluation and improvement as a major challenge throughout higher education.

The value, worth, and/or effectiveness is definitely suggested by the fact that although the severe teacher shortage was alleviated in

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT IN GEORGIA

The FDIG Program:

Was established in 1964 as a cooperative effort in the professional development of faculty members in other Georgia institutions of higher education (public and private).

Faculty Participation:

Over a seventeen-year period (1965-1982) at least 125 faculty members of four-year and two-year colleges enrolled in doctoral programs at the University of Georgia. A total of 180 FDIG awards were given for one or more years to seek doctoral degrees in academic programs with faculty shortages.

During its 37-year history (1964-2001), at least 347 awards have been given to at least 234 faculty members. Accepting an estimated average of $10,500 per annual stipend, the FDIG program has expended over 3.6 million dollars in support of faculty members serving other Georgia institutions of higher education.

Institutions:

No less than two-thirds of the accredited colleges in Georgia participated in the FDIG program by granting academic leave to faculty members seeking doctoral degrees. Five colleges made significant use of the program by the participation of a dozen or more faculty members.

Faculties in 36 colleges received a total of 171 awards. Twenty-two of the 36 colleges were four-year, public institutions, twelve were private, four-year colleges, and three were private, two-year colleges.

Graduation Rates:

Although completion of degree requirements was but one of the program's objectives, eighty-six doctoral degrees were earned, an average of three per year during the years of 1982-1996.

Fields of Specialization:

Ranking *first* in number of faculty participants were Educational Disciplines; Fine Arts and Humanities were *second* Behavioral and Social Sciences, *third*; Business *fourth*; and Natural Sciences, *fifth*.

the 1970s, *no one* has suggested in any way that the FDIG program should be discontinued. The reason must surely be "the mutual benefits that continue to accrue." The faculty members chosen for participation in the FDIG program continue to be *good* graduate students in pursuit of their doctoral degrees; not only has the program produced better qualified teaching faculty, it has produced administrators and professional staff members who are experienced classroom instructors.

In a day and at a time when there are numerous publications promising a "scholarship of teaching" and a "scholarship of engagement", there are excellent reasons why those of us addressing a national need to improve undergraduate education and to develop more effective ways of rewarding excellence in teaching should be well informed about what has worked well in the past. Technological innovation, with all its promises and its fascinating possibilities, should be encouraged in every reasonable way—but none of us should forget that technology, like all effective methods of teaching and learning, have "long roots."

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THIS ISSUE . . .

This issue of IHE PERSPECTIVES has made generous use of Dr. Libby Morris' monograph summarizing thirty-five years of data and information about Faculty Development in Georgia. It has also borrowed freely from periodic reports prepared by graduate assistants in the Institute of Higher Education. And necessary to add, this issue relies heavily on the author's memory of "several different eras" of a national concern with teaching and learning.

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